

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for preventing theft in automotive vehicle service centers comprising:

a transmitter configured to transmit a wireless

5 security signal which defines a perimeter;

at least one portable tool for use in the automotive vehicle service centers comprising:

10 a receiver configured to receive the transmitted security signal; and

security circuitry coupled to the receiver and configured to disable the portable tool if the tool is outside the perimeter defined by the security
15 signal.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the portable tool comprises a battery tester.

20 3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the security signal comprises one of a diffused infrared signal and a radio frequency signal.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the radio
25 frequency signal of the transmitter and the receiver incorporate a Bluetooth protocol.

5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the radio frequency signal of the transmitter and the receiver incorporate an 802.11b protocol.

5 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the perimeter of the security signal is defined by a predetermined signal strength.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the portable
10 tool is outside the perimeter if the security signal is less than the predetermined signal strength.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the security circuitry is configured to disable the portable tool
15 if a predetermined period of time has elapsed since the portable tool was outside the perimeter defined by the security signal.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the portable
20 tool further comprises an output operably coupled to the security circuitry, wherein the security circuitry is further configured to output a continuous audible noise if the tool is outside the perimeter defined by the security signal.

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10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the portable tool further comprises a tool transmitter operably coupled to the security circuitry and configured to

transmit a theft signal if the tool is outside the perimeter defined by the security signal.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the portable
5 tool further comprises an internal power source configured to power the tool.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the receiver
comprises an embedded radio frequency identification
10 tag.

13. The apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising:
processing circuitry operably coupled to the
transmitter; and
15 an external receiver operably coupled to the
processing circuitry and configured to
receive a theft signal transmitted from the
tool if the tool is outside the perimeter
defined by the security signal.

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14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the external
receiver and the transmitter comprise a radio
frequency identification reader.

25 15. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the
processing circuitry further comprises a memory,
wherein the processing circuitry is configured to
record information related to the transmitted theft
signal to the memory.

16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to output an audible alarm when the processing circuitry
5 receives the transmitted theft signal.

17. An apparatus for preventing theft in automotive vehicle service centers comprising:

at least one transmitter configured to transmit
10 a wireless security signal which defines a perimeter;

at least one portable tool for use in the automotive vehicle service centers comprising:

15 a receiver configured to receive the transmitted security signal; and
security circuitry coupled to the receiver and configured to disable the portable tool if the tool at least partially
20 passes through the perimeter defined by the security signal.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the security signal comprises one of a direct infrared signal, a
25 diffused infrared signal and a radio frequency signal.

19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the tool further comprises an output operably coupled to the

security circuitry, wherein the security circuitry is further configured to output a continuous audible noise if the tool at least partially passes through the perimeter defined by the security signal.

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20. The apparatus of claim 17 and further comprising processing circuitry operably coupled to the transmitter, the processing circuitry including an external receiver configured to receive a theft
10 signal transmitted from the portable tool if the portable tool at least partially passes through the perimeter defined by the security signal.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the
15 processing circuitry further comprises a memory, wherein the processing circuitry is configured to record information related to the transmitted theft signal to the memory.

20 22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to sound an alarm when the processing circuitry receives the transmitted theft signal.

25 23. A method of preventing theft in automotive vehicle service centers, the method comprising:

transmitting a wireless security signal which
defines a perimeter;

receiving the transmitted security signal with a
receiver embedded in a portable tool; and
disabling the tool when the tool is outside the
perimeter defined by the security signal.

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24. The method of claim 23 and further comprising
receiving a theft signal transmitted from the
portable tool when the portable tool is outside the
perimeter defined by the security signal.